

March 31, 2004

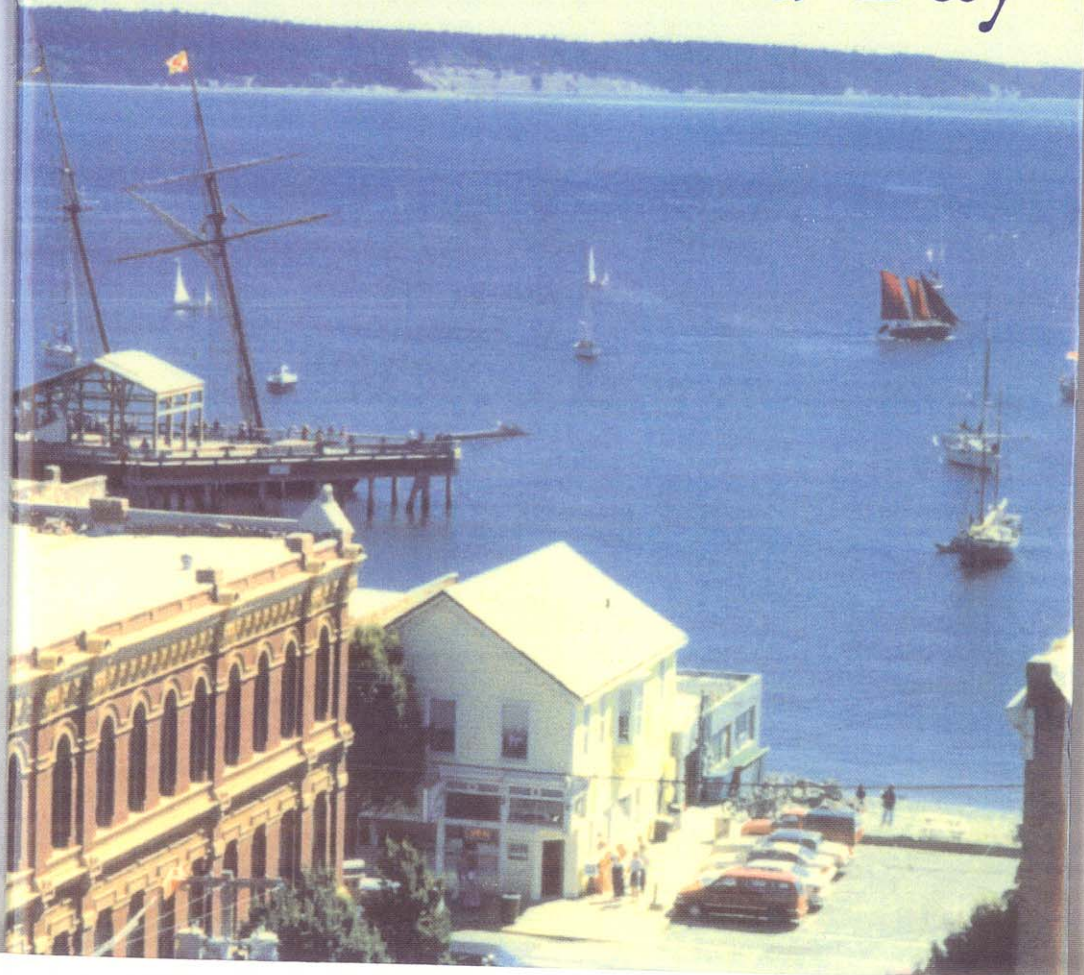
To the Honorable Greg Nickels  
And to the Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Dept. of Design  
Construction & Land Use  
MAR 31 2004  
**RECEIVED**

Thank you for the post card inviting me to the April 7, 2004, waterfront charrette presentation and exhibit. I had wanted to go to the initial charrette but could not. Had I gone I would have raised my hand and proposed an idea. That idea would have drawn snickers and befuddlement and scorn, maybe justified.

This letter is to reveal my idea. If you look at a mountain, you may form a desire to climb it. If you look at good dancers you may wish to take some dance lessons. If you look at the dock in the following photograph you may form a desire that is the idea. What is it?

# The Wharf at Port Townsend Bay





Years ago I went to Port Townsend as a young, inexperienced attorney and over time I learned about the community. I became president of the local bar association. I was president of the county historical society. I walked, hiked, jumped off river cliffs, floated down a river as salmon passed up, and talked and gossiped with many local people, most of whom are now dead.

What I learned, the essence of this letter, I learned from my oldest stepson --- for he and his friends would go to the outer edges of the Port Townsend wharves and jump in. It seemed nuts to me at the time. Later, I walked out the old Union Wharf and the manager, Ralph Watson, and his assistant, Heidi, had let the dogfish processing staff off for a dock party and people were climbing to the top of the wharf building, to the roof, and jumping off. I learned what they knew: you can jump into Puget Sound without feeling cold if you get out within about 7 seconds. Thereafter, I would frequently go and jump into Port Townsend Bay. One time I stood on the edge of that wharf and people on shore in a restaurant noticed and they stared out the window at me and at the storm waves passing. I dove off the dock and then swam to a ladder and got out within 7 seconds. A waitress later told me the people yelled and cheered when I reappeared.

Another time I took Harold Dollar for a ride out to Fort Worden. He repaired cars from the 1940's and 1950's in downtown Port Townsend. During the drive he told me how he had come to live in Port Townsend. His father was stationed at Fort Casey and Harold lived there with his parents. One night his father was in a tavern there when someone was disgruntled, left and fired a rifle back into the drinking establishment. Harold's father was killed and his mother moved the family to Port Townsend. We parked at Fort Worden down near the beach facing the big wharf there - and I could not resist the temptation for I want to jump off the shoreside of the wharf. He said he'd be glad to sit and wait. I went out and jumped. It was most stimulating. We then drove back on downtown. Harold has been gone now for me years. All the attorneys that practiced there when I arrived have departed years ago. In my mind there is a part like a Brigadoon that comes alive not every 100 years but every so often when I stop to recall this and that about Port Townsend, like now, writing this letter to you.

Dock jumping. That is it. The secrets are:

1. Know how to swim.
2. Start with a warm body - like keep a coat on until just before jumping.
3. Only jump in deep water - to avoid spinal fracture.
4. Get out in seven seconds.
5. Be sure exit ladder is free of sharp barnacles.

How does this apply to Seattle? Seattle could have as its tourist signature a licensed, commercial dock jump at the place marked by the arrow on following shoreline outline. Tourists could stand by the hundreds around the circular bay and watch people scream as they jump and scream as they get out.

How would Seattle do this? The city would not. The city would only authorize and monitor.

How would it be done? An area of dock, maybe at the southwest part of the wharf just south of the aquarium, would be leased. The lessee would install changing rooms and showers. The lessee would have certain dock jumping ledges that were above a floating, netted pen. A pipe on the bottom would suck in deeper water and that water would be filtered to exclude tentacles from the summer poisonous jellyfish. That same water would be released at the bottom of the pen to move toward the surface, thereby keeping surface oil away. No chemicals would be added to the bay. The lessee would have to confer with hydraulic experts and structural engineers and would have to submit to the city an agreeable plan. The city would require certain types of bonding and/or liability insurance.

The city would fish for a lessee, that is, announce its interest in such a tourist activity and just wait and see who might be interested. It might take a couple of years but the entire time the city would be learning more and more about dock jumping.

When you look at a high ski jump and think of someone soaring many feet in the air or examine some of the Seattle stairway railings and realize from the scrapped paint that some skateboarder risked his life, dock jumping is tame. It is exhilarating and may produce the uplifting brain synapses that all those people hang out all night hoping for on the Belltown sidewalks on Blanchard Street between 2nd and 5th Avenues.

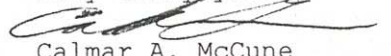
Anytime you'd like to try let me know. A friend of mine, Paul Macapius, now photographer for SAM, once visited Port Townsend, sport coat and all, and I persuaded him to jump off a dock. I'm ready.

Now you can hide this proposal and totally ignore it as dumb and unattainable, or you can phone, 547 5641 and/or 443 5633, and we can meet just south of the Seattle Aquarium for a jump. Because of uncertainty about barnacles on the ladder, we would wear shoes and leather gloves.

The matter of seven seconds, I can not explain except to say that upon hitting the cold water the brain is beset with so many signals of total panic and of assured discomfort that nothing registers - so there is no deep down inner feeling of coldness--- until the 8th second.

Regardless, thank you for reading this letter.

Very truly yours,

  
Calmar A. McCune  
2101 North 55th Street  
#113  
Seattle 98103





Seattle's Central Waterfront Plan

# charrette Presentation and Exhibit

April 7, 2004  
5:30 - 9:00pm

Pier 66  
Bell Harbor International Conference Center  
Elliott Hall

Mayor Greg Nickels cordially invites you  
to attend a presentation and exhibit of  
the results of the waterfront charrette.